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# Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MC-02 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 EB-07
IGA-02 AID-05 /101 W
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R 150630Z MAY 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1228
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 1832

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, MILI
SUBJECT: MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR YEMENI ARMED FORCES

BEGIN SUMMARY. DURING MAY 12 CALLS BY VISITING WAR COLLEGE GROUP, BOTH FOREIGN MINISTER AL-ASNAJ AND CHIEF-OF STAFF AL-GHASHMI MADE PLEAS FOR EARLIER AND FASTER DELIVERIES OF AMERICAN EQUIPMENT. AL-ASNAJ ALSO POINTED OUT THAT UNTIL SUCH TIME AS SIGNICICANT WESTERN EQUIPMENT IS DELIVERED HERE, YEMAN WILL STILL MAINTAIN ITS SOVIET ARMS CONNECTION. YEMENI PLEAS FOR EARLY DELIVERIES ARE NOT NEW BUT CURRENT SENSE OF URGENCY MUST BE VIEWED AGAINST APPARENT YEMENI PERCEPTION OF GROWING RADICAL THREAT TO IT MFROM PDRY AND ETHIOPIA. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MAY 12 CALL BY WAR COLLEGE GROUP BOTH FOREIGN MINISTRER AL-ASNAJ AND CHIEF-OF-STAFF AL-GHASHMI RESPOND TO QUESTIONS
ABOUT MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR THE YEMENI ARMY.
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AL-ASNAJ NOTED THAT YEMEN LOOKS FORWARD TO THE FULL AND EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECENTLY SIGNED SAUDI/AMERICAN ARMS SUPPLY AGREEMENT FOR THE YEMENI ARMED FORCES. HE STATED THAT YEMEN TENUINELY WISHES TO SEE ITS ARMED FORCES EQUIPPED WITH MODERN EQUIPMENT FROM THE WEST PARTICULARLY FROM THE U.S. THE SAME SENTIMENTS WERE EXPRESSED IN EVEN STRONGER TERMS BY CHIEF-OF-STAFF AL-GHASHMI IN AN EARLIER

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MEETING. AL-ASNAJ POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD BE
SOME TIME BEFORE YEMEN'S ARMED FORCES RECEIVED EQUIPMENT
OTHER THAN WHEELED VEHICLES AND SAID THAT YEMEN IS THUS
OBLIGED TO CONTINUE ITS ARMS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE

SOVIETS IN CERTAIN AREAS IN ORDER FOR YEMEN TO BE ABLE TO
PROTECT ITSELF BOTH FROM EXTERNAL AS WELL AS INTERNAL THREATS.

2. AL-ASNAJ EXPRESSED FULL UNDERSTANDING FOR THE WORKINGS
OF THE US POLITICAL SYSTEM BUT SAID THAT SOMETIMES THERE
IS TO MUCH "ROUTINE"INVOLVED AND THUS US FRIENDS ARE OFTEN
OBLIGED TO WAIT FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME BEFORE REQUESTS FOR
ASSISTANCE ARE FORTHCOMING. BOTH AL-ASNAJ AND AL-GHASHMI
COMPARED THIS SLOWNESS WITH THE SOVIETS WHO, THEY SAID, HAVE
A LARGE NUMBER OF SHIPS IN THE REGION CARRYING MILITARY ARMS
AND WHICH CAN BE DIVERTED QUICKLY ONCE THE SOVIETS DECIDE
THAT ARMS ARE NEEDED IN A COUNTRY FOR EITHER POLITICAL OR
MILITARY REASONS. AL-ASNAJ CONTINUED THAT YEMEN, OF COURSE,
DOES NOT WISH TO SUGGEST THAT THE US SHOULD CHANGE ITS
SYSTEM BUT IT ONLY HOPES THAT US MIGHT MOVE A LITTLE MORE
QUICKLY TO HELP ITS FRIENDS WHO ARE IN NEED OR WHO ARE BEING
THREATENED.

3. BOTH AL-ASNAJ AND AL-GHASHMI EMPHASIZED THAT THE
PRESENT TIME THE MOST SERIOUS THREAT TO YEMEN COMES FROM
ETHIOPIA. (AL-GHWCHMI OBSERVED THAT ETHIOPIA IS IN A
POSITION NOW TO BOMB SANA AND THE YEMENI AIR FORCE WOULD
NOT BE ABLE TO DEFEND THE CITY.)

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4. AL-ASNAJ JOKINGLY NOTED THAT I, AS U.S. AMBASSADOR,
HAVE NOT BEEN VERY HAPPY ABOUT THE IDEA OF CONTINUED SOVIET
SUPPLY OF ARMS TO YEMEN BUT ADDED THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY
MAJOR US OR WESTERN EQUIPMENT THE YEMENI ARMY MUST STILL
LOOK TO THE SOVIETS FOR SOME ITEMS. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE US AND
OTHER FRIENDS OF YEMEN WILL UNDERSTAND YARG'S
POSITION ON ARMS SUPPLY AND NOT DEDUCE FROM THIS THAT YEMEN'S
BASIC PLICIES ARE IN ANY WAY BEING AFFECTED.

5. AL-GHASHMI MADE GENERALLY SAME POINTS WHILE STRESSING
OVER AND OVER AGAIN THE NEED FOR EARLY AND QUICK DELIVERIES OF
MORE MODERN EQUIPMENT TO YEMEN'S ARMED FORCES FROM THE WEST
AND ESPECIALLY FROM THE US. HE SPECIFICALLY HOPED THAT THE
QUESTION OF F-5S FOR YEMEN WOULD BE DECIDED SOON IN ORDER
TO ENABLE THE YEMENI AIR FORCE TO BEGIN RE-TRAINING OF ITS
MIG PILOTS WHICH HE THOUGHT COULD TAKE PLACE IN ABOUT SIX
MONTHS. HE CONCLUDED BY EXPRESSING AGAIN, AS HE HAS IN THE
PAST, HOW MUCH HE "HATES" THE SOVIETS AND HOW HE WANTS TO SEE
THEIR PRESENCE REMOVED FROM THE YEMENI ARMY "FROM TOP TO

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BOTTOM."

6 COMMENT: YEMENI VIEWS ON THE NEED FOR EARLIER AND
SPEEDIER DELIVERIES OF US ARMS ARE NOT NEW. WHAT IS INTER-
ESTING, HOWEVER, IS THE APPARENT SENSE OF INCREASED URGENCY IN LIGHT
OF
WHAT THE YARG NOW PERCEIVES TO BE ASERIOUS AND GROWING THREAT
FROM ETHIOPIA IN ADDITION TO THAT ALREADY COMING FROM PDRY.
FACT THAT PDRY IS SUPPORTING EHTIOPIA ALSO APPARENTLY INCREASES
YEMENI CONCERN. WHILE MAKING ALLOWANCES FOR YEMENI DESIRE TO
PLAY ON ANTI-SOVIET FEARS OF SAUDI ARABIA, REGIME APPEARS
GENUINELY CONCERNED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE REGION PARTICILARLY
IN WAKE OF RECENT AL-HAJRI ASSASSINATION WHOSE ORGANIZATION IS BEING
ATTRIBUTED TO PDRY AND IRAQ. AT THE SAME TIME YARG HOPES
THE US AND YEMEN'S OTHER FREINDS WILL APPRECIATE THAT YEMEN
IS STILL IN AN EXPOSED POSITION WHILE WAITING FOR THE ARRIVAL
OF US ARMS AND THUS CANNOT ENTIRELY BREAK WITH SOVIETS WHOM
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YEMENIS FEAR BUT WHOM THEY ALSO NNED. AL-GHASHMI PUT IT IN TERMS
OF A STORY INVOLVING A YEMENI JEW WHO DECIDED TO BECOME A
MUSLIM BUT BEFORE HE HAD A CHANCE TO LEARN FULLY THE TEACHINGS
OF ISLV DIED. DRUING THE FUNERAL SERVICE HIS FRIENDS WERE
WEEPING AND BEMOANING THE FACT THAT THE POOR MAN WAS UP IN THE
AIR BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL BECAUSE NEITHER MOHAMMAD NOR MOSES
COULD INTERCEDE ON HIS BEHALF INASMUCH AS HE HAD NOT LEARNED FULLY
ABOUT THE FORMER'S RELIGION WHILE ALREADY HAVING LEFT THE LATTER'S.
AL-GHASHMI CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT YEMEN IS LIKE THE PPOR JEW
UP "IN THE AIR" HAVING BROKEN WITH THE SOVIETS BUT STILL WAITING
FOR ITS NEW FRIENDS TO COME THROUGH.
SCOTES



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